

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method in a ~~in a~~ patron award system for selecting awards to be offered to patrons of a gaming establishment, the method comprising:

providing the patron award system, said patron award system comprising: 1) a patron database in which is maintained patron information relating to a plurality of patrons and historical transaction information involving said patrons; 2) a current activity database for storing ~~substantially current transaction activity information~~ observed preference data for said plurality of patrons; 3) a display device; 4) a central server operatively connected to said patron database, ~~and~~ said current activity database, and said display device, said central server including a processor and a memory associated with said processor wherein said memory further includes: a) data for generating a floor diagram of the gaming establishment including a relative position and an arrangement of gaming devices and gaming tables within the gaming establishment; b) a profile assignment module executable by said processor, said profile assignment module being disposed to regularly assign profiles to said plurality of patrons; c) an award matching module executable by said processor, said award matching module operating to match awards to ones of said profiles;

displaying ~~to on~~ the display device the floor diagram of the gaming establishment including the relative position and the arrangement of gaming devices and gaming tables within the gaming establishment;

storing patron information relating to the plurality of patrons and historical transaction information involving said patrons to the patron database;

receiving in the current activity database ~~substantially current transaction activity~~ observed preference data representing patron behavior observed in the gaming establishment ~~of for~~ at least a first patron of said plurality of patrons;

displaying a first interface on the display device ~~coupled to the central server~~, said first interface comprising a visual indicator of a location of said first patron rendered on the floor diagram of said gaming establishment;

generating, using the profile assignment module, a profile ~~to for~~ said first patron based at least upon portions of said historical transaction information pertinent to said first patron and said ~~current transaction activity~~ observed preference data;

matching, using said award matching module, two or more awards to said profile;

determining for each of the awards a likelihood of acceptance by said first patron based upon at least (i) the historical transaction information involving said patrons including the first patron, and (ii) the ~~current transaction activity~~ observed preference data of at least the first patron, and (iii) an operator-specified time period within which to consider the observed preference data;

sorting the two or more awards according to [[a]] ~~the likelihoods of the first patron accepting each award~~ acceptance; and

displaying on a second interface on the display device, ~~based upon said sorting~~; information regarding at least one recommendation of an award from the two or more awards to offer to the first patron wherein access to said first interface and said second interface is limited to operators of said gaming establishment.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 further including
defining a plurality of profiles associated with a corresponding plurality of profile valuations, said assigning further including selecting said profile from said plurality of profiles.
3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further including
defining a plurality of awards, said matching further including selecting a first award from said plurality of awards based upon a profile valuation of said profile and a value of said first award.
4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said profile is characterized by a profile valuation, said two or more awards being valued at less than or equivalent to said profile valuation.
5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said matching or said sorting includes considering award preferences of said first patron.
6. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein said matching further includes considering current conditions.
7. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein said award preferences are based at least in part

upon reaction of said first patron to other awards previously offered to said first patron.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said ~~monitoring~~ generating step further includes:

regularly evaluating substantially real-time transaction activity of each patron of said plurality of patrons; and

assigning a patron profile to each patron of said plurality of patrons based upon [[a]] respective portions of said historical transaction information and said substantially real-time transaction activity.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 further including matching one or more awards to each said patron profile.

10-20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented patron award system for a gaming establishment comprising:

a patron database in which is maintained patron information relating to a plurality of patrons and historical transaction information involving said patrons;

a current activity database ~~configured to store for storing substantially current transaction activity information~~ observed preference data for said plurality of patrons, the observed preference data representing patron behavior observed in the gaming establishment;

a display device;

a central server operatively connected to said patron database and said current activity database, said central server including a processor and a memory associated with said processor wherein said memory further includes:

data for ~~generating~~ to generate a floor diagram of the gaming establishment including a relative position and an arrangement of gaming devices and gaming tables within the gaming establishment;

a profile assignment module executable by said processor, said profile assignment module being disposed to regularly assign profiles to said plurality of patrons;

an award matching module executable by said processor, said award matching module operating to match awards to ones of said profiles;

logic executed by the processor ~~designed or~~ configured to, based upon at least the historical transaction information, ~~related to the plurality of patrons and said substantially current transaction activity of said plurality of patrons~~ the observed preference data, and an operator-specified time period within which to consider the observed preference data, 1) sort the matched awards according to a likelihood of a first patron of said plurality of patrons ~~assigned to said ones of said profiles~~ accepting the matched awards; 2) display a first interface on the display device, said first interface comprising a visual indicator of a location of said first patron rendered on the floor diagram of said gaming establishment; and 3) ~~to~~ display a second interface ~~to~~ on the display device, said second interface comprising, based upon results of said sort, information indicating at least one recommendation of a first award from the matched awards to offer to said first patron of said plurality of patrons assigned to said ones of said profiles wherein access to said first interface and said second interface is limited to operators of said gaming establishment.

22. (Original) The award system of claim 21 wherein said memory further includes a profile builder capable of being executed by said processor to define a set of profiles associated with corresponding profile valuations.

23. (Original) The award system of claim 22 wherein said profile assignment module is further disposed to select said profiles from said set of profiles.

24. (Original) The award system of claim 21 further including an awards database in which are defined a plurality of awards, said award matching module being further operative to select said awards from said plurality of awards.

25. (Original) The award system of claim 24 wherein a first of said awards matched to a first of

said profiles is characterized by an award valuation less than a profile valuation associated with said first of said profiles.

26. (Previously Presented) The award system of claim 24 wherein the display device is a hand-held device.

27. (Currently Amended) The award system of claim 24 wherein said logic is further ~~designed~~ ~~or~~ configured to generate a script containing information that describes how to deliver said first award to said first patron and wherein said central server is further configured to output said script to the display device.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the display device is a hand-held device.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising generating a script containing information that describes how to deliver said award to said first patron and outputting said script to the display device.

30. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the determining step further comprises determining for each of the awards a likelihood of acceptance by said first patron based upon a time of day.

31. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the observed preference data includes patron location observed within the gaming establishment.

32. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the observed preference data includes observed time played by a patron at a location within the gaming establishment.

33. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the observed preference data includes an observed meal type selected by a patron.